

20 July 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, CI, Research and Analysis

SUBJECT: Book on Colonel Abel

1. I received a letter of 8 July from one Louise D. Bernikow saying that she and Mr. Burton Silverman are working on a book to be published by Simon & Schuster about Rudolf Abel. She said she had been working on the book for a year, researching the Abel case and interviewing as many people as she could. She said she had recently spoken with Mr. William Tompkins, who had been most enthusiastic and helpful and had suggested that she write to me. I arranged to see Miss Bernikow and Mr. Silverman on 18 July, and Mr. Pforzheimer was with me.

2. Mr. Silverman started off by explaining his interest in Colonel Abel, which had arisen out of the fact that Abel had been his neighbor in Brooklyn apparently from about 1952 until the time of his arrest. It seems that Mr. Silverman, who is a painter, and Abel were on good terms, and Mr. Silverman mentioned that Abel had been a member of his wedding party. An indication of their relationship is given in Mr. Silverman's story that when Colonel Abel left for the west coast in 1955 for what Silverman thought was a short trip and stayed away for an extended time, Mr. Silverman said he was about to call the Missing Persons Bureau when Abel returned. He asked Abel what had happened, and Abel told him a long story about having a heart attack somewhere in the southwest on his way back from California and that he had been hospitalized and had some of his belongings stolen in the hospital. Mr. Silverman asked Colonel Abel why he had not written or called about his problems, and Abel said he had not wanted to bother anyone.

3. Miss Bernikow said that she had formerly been a model for Mr. Silverman and during the modeling periods she would try to make conversation, and at one time Mr. Silverman told her about

a neighbor who had been arrested as a spy. She said she found this so interesting that she suggested they write a book, and this started them on their research. I told them that basically Abel had not been our problem as the case really started with his arrest and, therefore, was the responsibility of the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. I said of course we were interested in Colonel Abel and his career but since he had not been our direct responsibility I did not think we would have a great deal of information which would be useful to them.

4. Mr. Pforzheimer discussed with them the various Russian publications which had been put out since the Russians had surfaced the Abel case, and they seemed to be thoroughly familiar with these and to have done a very complete job of research. They are getting their own translations of the Russian articles but do not plan to try to translate THE SWORD AND THE SHIELD.

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5. They had several points on Hayhanen they wanted to clear up. The first one was that after he had reached [REDACTED] he had first reported to his superiors in accordance with instructions and then had made contact with the CIA man he had known previously, who told him to go to the [REDACTED]. I said I had no information to support this and had always been of the understanding that he had just been a walk in to the [REDACTED]. They said that had been their understanding too and they had not put much credence on the prior contact with the CIA man. They did not ask any questions about CIA's role at this time or the return of Hayhanen to the United States. They then asked about the facts concerning Hayhanen's death as they were curious about the report that he had been killed in a turnpike crash. I said I had heard this from Mr. Donovan and Mr. Tompkins but they told conflicting stories and I know of no facts to support anything to do with death by automobile accident, as I had understood that Hayhanen had died of [REDACTED]. They said they would probably discard the turnpike story although they had thought of traveling the length of the New Jersey Turnpike quering all the police and attendants to see if they could get any clue as to a possible accident involving Hayhanen. They also asked if they could get the date of Hayhanen's death and of his widow's return to Finland. I said I might be able to get the date of death and if so would let them know, but that probably the Immigration people would have the information on her return to Finland.

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6. They asked if we could confirm the Russian stories about Abel's career. Mr. Pforzheimer and I said we doubted we could confirm or deny specific statements of fact. Mr. Pforzheimer warned them that frequently the Russians would embellish stories of this nature or might have reason to distort them in one way or another. They also asked if we had any information about his current activities and situation and whether he was, as they said they had read in Mr. Dulles' book, head of the American section of the KGB. I said it was my recollection that Mr. Dulles' book had not said he was head of the American section but would, if the KGB had any sense, make a good head of that section. I said we had no information about his current activities other than the Russian pronouncements and his correspondence with Mr. James Donovan.

7. I asked whether they had not gone to the FBI, and Mr. Silverman said they had gone but found the FBI representative reluctant to discuss the Abel case. Apparently, however, they got all the cooperation they wanted from Mr. Tompkins on the actual trial.

8. We left it that I would check to see if we had any usable information which would check or confirm their research but I was very doubtful there would be anything that would be helpful, and we would have to retrieve material from Archives in any case. They said if we had anything they would be glad to agree to use it without attribution, particularly as they were not planning to footnote their book. They said it was not intended to be so much a formal biography as a portrait and interpretation of Abel as a man.

9. My own impression is that these are pleasant young people and probably quite bright. They obviously have done a great deal of work and seemed to know pretty well what they are about. Apparently Miss Bernikow, who is now according to her comments teaching English in New York, is the main figure in this project. She gave her address as [REDACTED] (I notice she uses the French or continental 7 which is written with a crossbar on the stem.) Mr. Silverman's only comment about what had happened after the arrest was that no one had come and talked to him even though he was an old friend of Abel's and he felt a little left out. I did not specifically ask him whether he had been interrogated by the FBI or any other arm of the Government.

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LAWRENCE R. HOUSTON
General Counsel

cc: HIC
Asst to DCI-Mr. Goodwin